

WINTER 2012

Fit to Travel

Going out of town takes you away from home and away from your routine, however, you don't have to fall off your fitness routine when you're on the road.

You may have to modify things a bit, but you can continue to reap the benefits of being physically active—wherever your destination may be.

We often have a list of excuses as to why we can't follow our usual fitness routine when we travel for business or vacation. Those excuses include:

- I don't have time.
- I don't have a gym available.
- I don't know which exercises I should do.
- I don't have any space.

But if you'll view physical activity and fitness as something **"I want to do,"** rather than something **"I have to do,"** you'll find it easy to drop the excuses and start finding solutions.

Some exercises are easy to do even when away from the gym. The majority of these exercises don't require much space and, in most cases, any special equipment. Examples include calisthenics such as push-ups, jumping jacks, or core-strengthening exercises (exercises that strengthen the muscles in the torso, back, and pelvic area).

For information on core strengthening, read "Getting to the Core of the Matter" in this issue of Wellness Fitness or visit our Web site at www.FOH.hhs.gov/core.

Tips for your on-the-road workout:

- Your warm-up should mimic the workout. Use similar movements as the sport or fitness routine you have planned for that day.
- Stretch after you warm up.
- Start by working larger muscle groups—legs, chest, abdominals, and back.

- Set a slow and consistent pace at the start of your routine. Listen to your body. Some discomfort from exertion is okay, but not pain from overstraining or injury.
- Stay hydrated. Drink water before and after the workout. Factor in the time of year and climate, because you may need more hydration sometimes than you will at others.
- Stretch again after the workout.

Being physically active and maintaining your fitness routine while you travel has many benefits. It promotes strong bones and muscles; relieves stress; improves mood; promotes better sleep; and boosts energy.

Just as you made time to read this article, you can make time to stay fit. So, drop the excuses and keep moving; you'll be glad you did. □



Getting to the Core of the Matter

Your core muscles, located in the center of the body, are used for bending, twisting, providing stability, and maintaining good posture.

You can think of them as the powerhouse in the center of your body, because they also enhance your sports performance.

The core muscles include:

- **Abdominal muscles**
- **Back muscles**
- **Muscles in the pelvic region**

You should do about 10 to 12 repetitions of each of the exercises. Depending on your level of experience and fitness,

you may want to start with two sets of each exercise and work your way up to four or more.

While core-strengthening exercises can help many people who have experienced back problems, people with back problems will want to take special care when doing some of them. If you currently have problems with your back or have had them in the past, seek advice from your healthcare or rehabilitation professional before adopting an exercise regimen.

Some common core strengthening exercises are shown below.

CRUNCH OR “SIT-UP”



Starting on your back, lift the torso up—engaging the abdominals the entire time.

OPPOSITE ARM-LEG REACHES



Starting on your hands and knees, stretch out the left arm while you're stretching out the right leg. Then alternate the movement using opposite arms and legs.

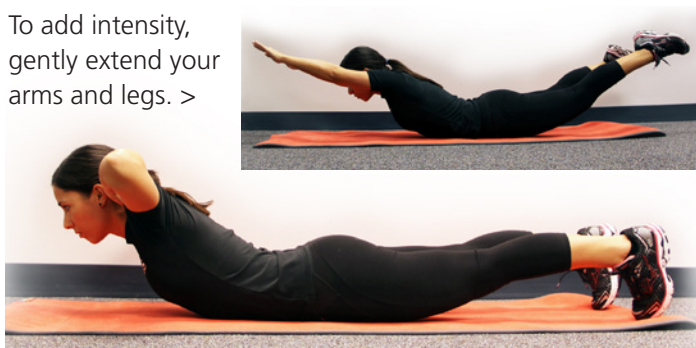
TORSO TWIST



Sitting on the ground with your legs extended in front of you and your heels touching the ground, engage the abdominal muscles by leaning back slightly. Alternately twist left and right. You can hold a weight in your hands if you'd like more resistance.

BACK EXTENSIONS

To add intensity, gently extend your arms and legs. >



Lie on your stomach and lift your torso off the floor, engaging the lower back muscles. You'll be facing the ground as you gently lift your torso, extend the spine forward, avoiding “crunching” the lower back muscles.

Seeking Out the “C”

In the course of our fast-paced lives, we sometimes don't take the time to eat right. One vitamin you should seek out—even on your busiest day—is Vitamin C.

Vitamin C is a nutritional powerhouse. It promotes a healthy immune system; it's involved in tissue repair and healing and it's an important antioxidant; and it helps to protect the body from damaging free-radicals. Free-radicals are naturally produced during the metabolism process (breaking down food into energy) and when the body is exposed to toxins like tobacco smoke, air pollution, or radiation.

When we think of natural sources of vitamin C, the first thing that often comes to mind is orange juice. Orange juice is a convenient way to get a nice big dose of vitamin C in the morning. According to the USDA, other good sources of vitamin C include:

- One cup red bell pepper (raw): 190 mg (milligrams)

- Two medium kiwifruits: 141 mg
- One cup broccoli cooked: 101 mg
- One cup strawberries: 97 mg
- One cup papaya (raw): 85 mg
- One medium orange: 69.7 mg - 95.8 mg in a cup of oranges

The daily amount of vitamin C recommended depends on your age, sex, and other factors. Here are a few examples:

- Adults (men): 90 mg
- Adults (women): 75 mg

Some people may need extra vitamin C in their diets:

- Smokers: Add 35 mg to the above values to calculate your total daily recommended amount
- Pregnant women: Add 10 mg to the above values for adult women

- Breastfeeding women: Add 45 mg to the above values for adult women
- People recovering from surgery
- People exposed to pollution, radiation, and secondhand smoke
- Burn victims

If you're getting vitamin C from natural sources, you'll also be taking in a lot of other amazing nutrients because some of the best sources of vitamin C are fruits and vegetables. In fact, fruits and vegetables are an excellent way to get many vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

So, make sure you slow down long enough to fit some Vitamin C into your busy day. You'll be giving your body and your immune system a great boost. □



Set Your Course for Success

Making a change in your life takes determination and consistent effort; it doesn't happen overnight. Personal change is often like a voyage and—like a sailor—you need to decide on your destination and set your course.



Like any journey, you must then keep yourself oriented and make adjustments along the way to get to your destination as directly as possible.

BE CLEAR ABOUT YOUR DESTINATION

Think about your goal, and about what it would mean to meet it. Having a clear mental picture of what success looks like can help you recognize that a goal is achievable. This is highly motivating.

You can write your thoughts down, you can make a drawing of your completed goal, or you can use photos or illustrations from magazines to construct a visual reminder of how success will look. A reminder can help keep you inspired.

SET YOUR COURSE

Break down your main goal into the logical steps it will take to get there. For example, if the goal is to be more physically active, you might take these steps:

1. I will check with my doctor to see if there are any restrictions or cautions I should be aware of in order to begin a daily combined cardio and strength training regimen.
2. I will begin with 2 sessions of brisk walking for at least 10 minutes (for a total of at least 20 minutes each day) for the first two weeks.
3. I will walk briskly for 30 minutes every morning and do 15 minutes of strength training every other day for the next three weeks.
4. I will jog or cycle or do some other cardio workout for 30 minutes every morning and add 10 more minutes to my strength training routine.

By setting short-term goals, those many “**little victories**” can help spur you on to reaching your ultimate goal. Remember to celebrate these victories.

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Keep a chart of what you've accomplished. Think of ways that you can measure your success; for example, record the number of times you've

finished your reports early or chart how much weight you've lifted at the gym. Tracking your progress is highly motivating and reinforces positive new habits.

ADJUST YOUR COURSE AS NEEDED

Sailors need to reorient themselves as they travel and then replot their courses accordingly. This ensures that they stay on course despite changes in wind direction, currents, or foul weather. You need to do this when you're changing a habit, too. Check on your goals from time to time, and figure out where you are actually headed. If you find that you've veered off course, just make the necessary adjustments without judging yourself harshly. Even the best sailors make many adjustments as they sail to their destinations; why shouldn't you? □

